

Executive Officer's Statement

October 23, 2008

October is Domestic Violence Awareness Month

In recognition of Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger's proclamation of October as California Domestic Violence Awareness Month, we are highlighting resources available to domestic violence victims. We teamed with the State and Consumer Services Agency on a press release featuring information on how the Victim Compensation Program, the Secretary of State's Safe at Home mail forwarding service and local resources can help victims of domestic violence. Typically, one quarter of the approximately 50,000 applications received annually by the Victim Compensation Program are for claims related to domestic violence. The Victim Compensation Program offers a relocation benefit that can be particularly helpful for domestic violence victims who need to move to a safe location. The Board has also published an information sheet titled "Relocation, Housing and Shelter Resources for Victims of Domestic Violence and Other Violent Crimes" in both English and Spanish. This publication explains relocation benefits, lists state and local resources, and provides safety tips for domestic violence victims. This month, we are also participating in a number of domestic violence awareness events.

Comprehensive Review of VCGCB Regulations

VCGCB is undertaking a comprehensive review of Victim Compensation Program regulations. The proposed revisions include technical clarifications, substantive suggestions for improvement, and codifying the Board's interpretation of program statutes. We are reaching out to our stakeholders and other interested parties to obtain their input. In August, we began an informal review process and notified stakeholders and interested parties of the opportunity to provide comment on proposed changes. We continued with the posting of proposed revised text for the regulations based on feedback we received. The informal review will culminate with two workshops, one in Los Angeles on November 5 and the second in Sacramento on November 7, where interested parties are invited to ask questions and provide comment on the proposed changes. We will bring the final proposed regulations to the Board by the end of the calendar year. The Board's direction at that time to proceed will allow the formal rulemaking process to commence in early 2009.

CaRES Automated Claims Management System

During the 2007-08 Fiscal Year, the CaRES automated claims management system for the Victim Compensation Program proved that it was capable of taking over claims-processing duties from its predecessor, an outdated mainframe system. The new system helped the program process volumes of applications that were significantly higher than the prior year. CaRES' capabilities also contributed to increased payouts to victims. Total payments in Fiscal Year 2007-08 were approximately \$81 million. It is now time to focus on making some key enhancements to CaRES, which will allow us to provide even better and more responsive service to victims of crime. For example, we plan to improve the system's ability to manage correspondence with applicants. Communicating effectively with claimants is essential for good customer service. Another priority will be to add features to CaRES' recently introduced Criminal Disposition Tracking System. This will give the restitution specialists in local counties who use the system an enhanced array of information, further facilitating their work in requesting restitution from criminal offenders. These revenues are returned to the Restitution Fund.

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California State Employees Charitable Campaign

The California State Employees Charitable Campaign began in September and this year's theme is "Reaching for the Stars." The campaign is the only authorized workplace charitable fund-raising campaign for state employees. Last year \$8.7 million was raised through donations from 51,000 employees. This year's goal is to raise \$10 million. Governor Schwarzenegger is the Campaign Chair. Here at VCGCB, the campaign is in full swing and staff have been reaching deep to show their generosity and community spirit. The campaign kick-off and cake auction on October 1 was a great success with staff contributing 62 cakes which raised \$1259.00. More than a dozen events are part of the campaign. Many employees will also be electing to make payroll deductions that support the non-profit organizations of their choice throughout the year.

Awareness Activities

Our ongoing outreach and awareness activities include the following events and meetings:

- Various forums with licensed healthcare providers, such as psychologists and marriage and family therapists, in locations throughout the state to share information regarding the VCP.
- Presentations to local law enforcement agencies throughout California.
- Statewide Day of Awareness Event, Californians Uniting to End Domestic Violence, State Capitol, October 1.
- Crime Survivors Annual 5k Run/Walk Health and Safety Expo, Los Alamitos, October 11.
- Domestic Violence Coordinating Council Training Conference, Seaside, October 17.
- Twentieth Annual Convention of the LA County Psychological Association, Culver City, October 18.
- Governor and First Lady's Women's Conference, Long Beach, October 21-22.
- 27th UC Davis International Conference on Child Abuse and Neglect, Sacramento, October 27-29.
- U.S. Psychiatric and Mental Health Congress, San Diego, October 30-November 2.

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Executive Officer